



Profile of New York City’s Korean Americans

Introduction

Using data from 2006-2010 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) Selected Population Tables and the 2010 U.S. census, this profile outlines characteristics and trends among New York City’s Korean American population.¹ It presents statistics on population size and changes, immigration, citizenship status, educational attainment, English ability, income, poverty, health insurance and housing. Comparisons with New York City’s general population are provided for context.

New York City’s Korean population was the third largest Asian ethnic group, behind Chinese and Indians. Relative to all residents, Koreans in New York City were more likely to be:

- working-age adults,
- better educated,
- limited English proficient,
- living in poverty if an adult, and
- renting.

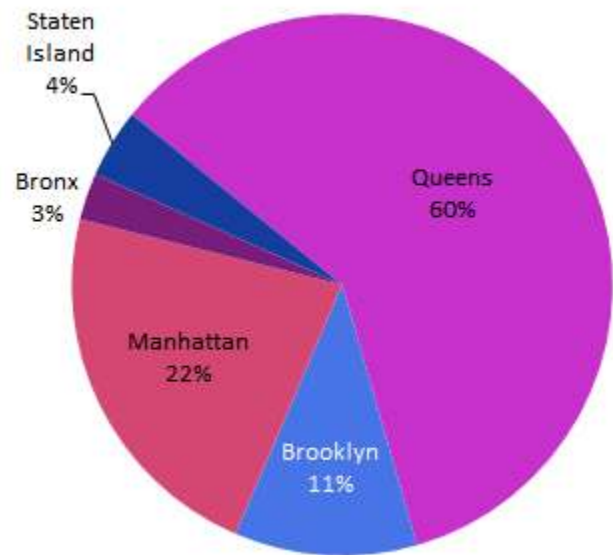


Figure 1: Korean Population by Borough

Population

From 2010 to 2015, the Korean alone or in combination population in New York City decreased slightly by 0.2 percent from 98,402 to 98,158 – compared to the city’s overall 4 percent increase and the 13 percent growth of the total Asian population. The Korean alone population decreased by 1.5 percent from 93,131 in 2010 to 91,729 in 2015.

New York City was home to 67 percent of New York State’s Korean residents. The majority (60 percent) of Korean New Yorkers lived in Queens (Figure 1). The remainder lived mostly in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Neighborhoods with higher concentrations of Koreans include Bayside, Douglaston, Elmhurst, Flushing, and Murray Hill in Queens; and Koreatown in Midtown Manhattan.

In 2015, working-age adults (age 18 to 64) were a larger share of New York City’s Korean population, comprising 76 percent of the group, compared with 66 percent of

Facts on Korean Population in New York City	
Alone or in-Combination Population	98,158
Percent Change from 2010 to 2015	-0.2%
Immigration and Citizenship	
Percent of Population Foreign Born	70%
Percent of Foreign Born Who are Citizens	48%
Educational Attainment for Adults Age 25 or Older	
Percent of Adults without High School Diploma	9%
Percent of Adults with a Bachelor’s Degree	53%
Limited English Proficiency	
Percent of Population Age 5 or Older	50%
Income	
Median Household Income	\$58,153
Median Family Income	\$62,238
Per Capita Income	\$34,995
Poverty	
Percent of Total Population Living in Poverty	18.8%
Percent of Children Living in Poverty	14.6%
Percent of Seniors Living in Poverty	25.7%



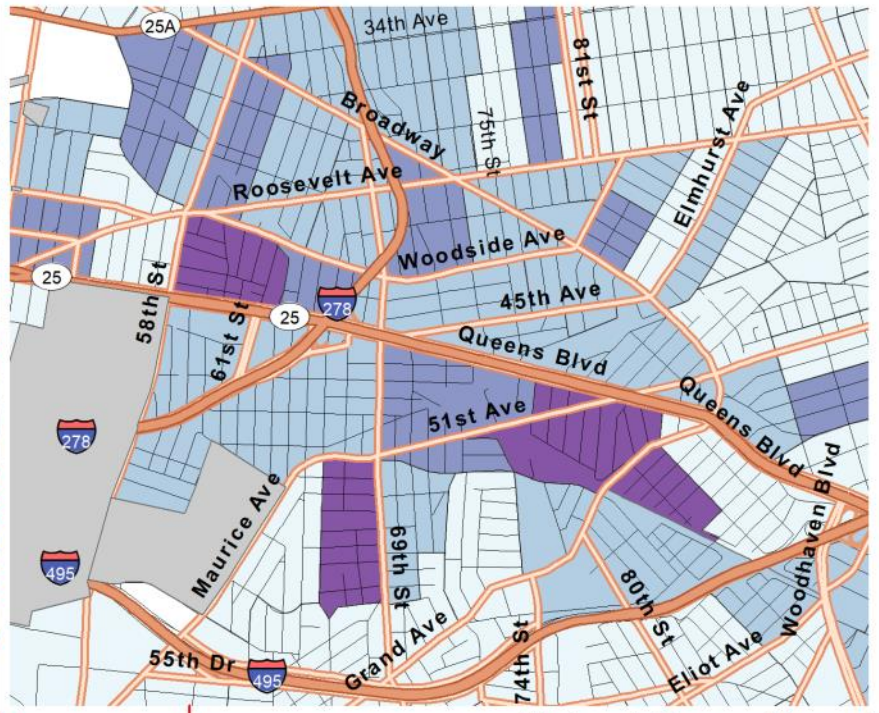
Koreatown, Manhattan Borough
Legend

Landmarks

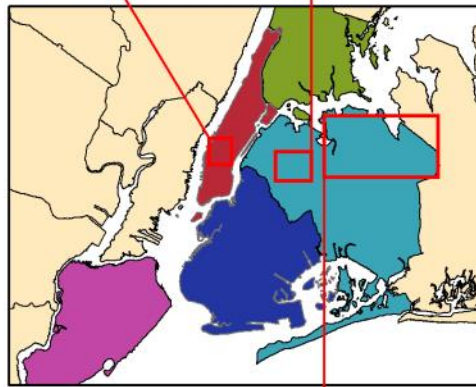
Korean Population

As Percent of Total Population

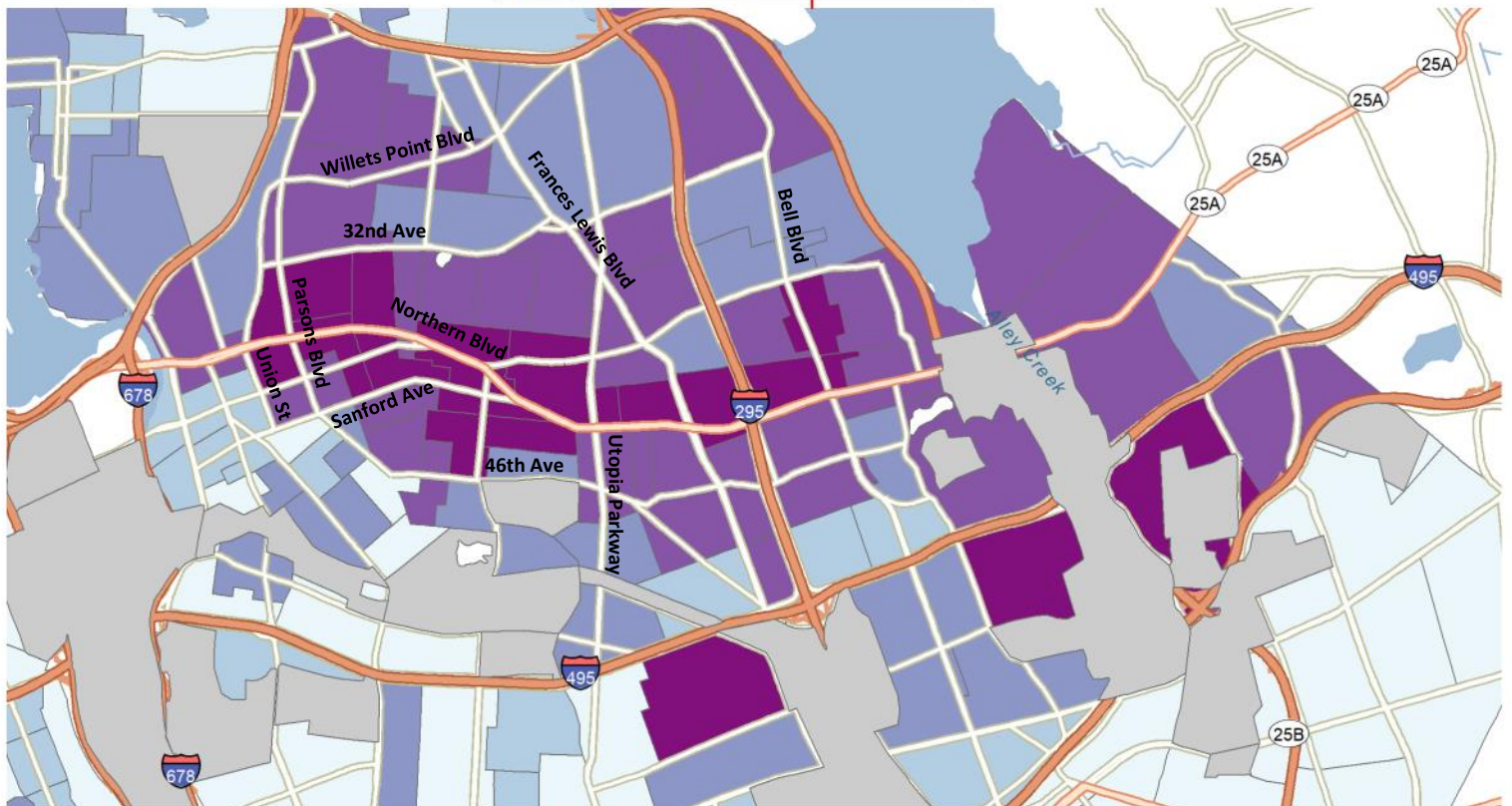
- 0% - 1.1%
- 1.2% - 3.8%
- 3.9% - 8.8%
- 8.9% - 18.6%
- 18.7% - 32.3%



Elmhurst, Queens Borough



Flushing, Murray Hill, and
Bayside, Queens Borough



all city residents. Children (under 18 years of age) and seniors (age 65 or older) each constituted 14 and 10 percent of the city’s Korean population, compared with 21 percent and 13 percent, respectively, of the citywide population in those age groups.

Immigration and Citizenship

About 70 percent of New York City’s Koreans in 2015 were foreign-born, compared to 37 percent of all city residents. Korean immigrants in New York City were about as likely to be recent arrivals as immigrant New Yorkers in general, with 11 percent of Koreans arriving in 2010 or later, similar to the 10 percent rate for immigrants in general. Of all the city’s foreign-born Korean residents, 48 percent were naturalized citizens, lower than the 53 percent of all foreign-born New Yorkers.

Education

Koreans in 2015 had more schooling than the city’s general population. Of the city’s 73,508 Korean adults, 9 percent had not graduated from high school, comparatively lower than 20 percent of adults citywide.² Also, 4 percent of Korean adults in New York City had less than a ninth-grade education – less than the 10 percent rate for all adult New Yorkers.

At the high end of the educational spectrum, about three fourths (72 percent) of Korean adults in New York City had some sort of post-secondary education, compared with slightly over half (56 percent) of all city adults. More than half (53 percent) of Korean adults in New York City had a bachelor’s degree or higher, higher than one third (36 percent) of all city adults.

English Proficiency

New York City’s Korean residents had a higher incidence of limited English proficiency (LEP) than New Yorkers as a whole in 2015.³ Half (50 percent) of the city’s total Korean population spoke English well, not well, or not at all –double the 23 percent rate for New Yorkers overall (Figure 2). Korean children and seniors in particular had LEP rates which were more than twice as high as their age-group peers in the general population.

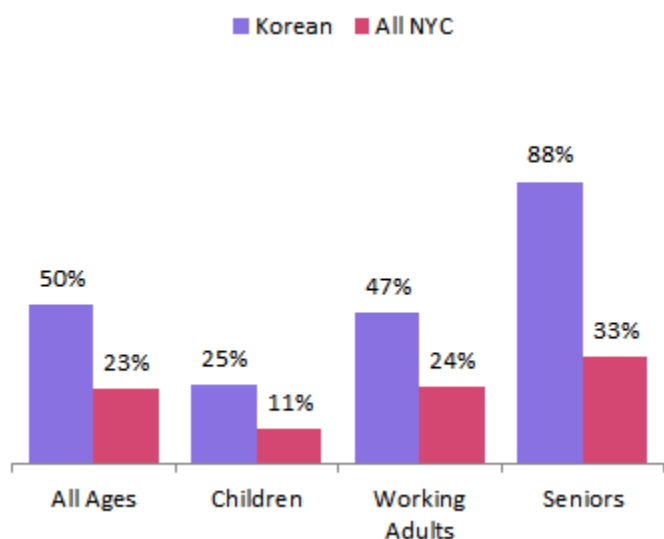
Income

Korean New Yorkers had higher incomes than New York City residents overall for all income gauges.⁴ The median income for Korean households was \$58,153, more than the \$53,373 median for all households in the city. Median family income was \$62,238 for Koreans and \$59,285 for city residents as a whole. Additionally, Korean per capita income was \$34,995 – slightly more than \$33,078 citywide.

Poverty

The poverty rates for Korean residents in relation to the total New York City population were lower overall, but higher for working-age adults and seniors.⁵ Among all Koreans in the city, 18.8 percent lived below the poverty line, compared with the general New York City poverty rate of 20.6 percent. Only 14.6 percent of Korean children in New York City experienced poverty, compared with 29.5 percent of all city children. For adult Koreans, 18.6 percent of working-age Korean adults and 25.7 percent of elderly Koreans in the city lived in poverty, higher than 18.1 percent and 18.8 percent, respectively, for residents citywide in those age groups.

Figure 2: Limited English Proficiency Rates



Health Insurance Coverage

Koreans were more likely to not have health insurance, with 22.9 percent of Koreans uninsured, compared with 12.4 percent of the general population. Among children, 6.0 percent of Korean children were uninsured, compared to 3.6 percent of all children. Koreans relied much less on public insurance options than the general population, with only 24.4 percent of Koreans having public insurance coverage compared to 40.3 percent of all New Yorkers.

Housing

Korean New Yorkers in 2015 had a smaller average household size than households in general (2.53 people versus 2.65 people). Korean households were less likely to be overcrowded than households in general, with 7 percent of Korean households and 9 percent of households in general having more than one occupant per room.

Korean households had lower rates of owning homes compared to New York City households in general. More than one in four (28 percent) of households owned their homes, compared with 32 percent homeowners in the city overall.

Endnotes

¹ Data sources used in this brief were 2011-2015 American Community Survey Selected Population Tables, and are for the Korean Alone or in Any Combination category, unless otherwise noted. Statistics from 2010 used 2006-2010 American Community Survey Selected Population Tables.

² For educational attainment, adults were defined as people age 25 or older.

³ “Limited English Proficiency” refers to individuals age 5 years and older who reported speaking English well, not well, or not at all.

⁴ Household income refers to the income of all occupants of a housing unit. Family income referred to the earnings of a group of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together.

⁵ Families and individuals were classified as below the poverty line if their total family income or unrelated individual income over the last 12 months was less than the poverty threshold specified for the applicable family size, age of householder, and number of related children younger than 18 present for the year and month the data was collected. For these thresholds, please see <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>.

Technical Notes

Race Categories

Beginning with the Census 2000, the Census Bureau collects data in which respondents were allowed to mark more than one race. For example, 2000 data include results for single-race as well as multiple-race responses. “Korean Alone” corresponds to the respondents who reported only Asian Indian and no other race category. “Alone” should be considered the minimum population size in any analysis that uses Census Bureau data.

To be as inclusive as possible, this profile uses “Korean Alone or in Any Combination” numbers where possible. “Alone or in Any Combination” corresponds to the responses (not respondents) that included Korean, either alone or in any combination with other Asian groups or other race categories. If a respondent selected Korean and another racial group (e.g., Korean and black), that individual, while excluded from the “Korean Alone” count, was tallied in the “Alone or in Any Combination” count for Asian Indian and the other racial group. Hence, some overlap in the “In Any Combination” numbers occurred. “Alone or in Any Combination” should be considered the maximum population size in any analysis that uses Census Bureau data.

About This Profile

This is one of a series of Asian American population profiles prepared by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center (CIC) to increase understanding of the rapidly-growing and diverse Asian American population in the New York metropolitan area.

Data citations from this profile should include the following acknowledgment: “Data derived from analysis by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center.”

For more information regarding this profile, please contact the Asian American Federation Census Information Center at (212) 344-5878 x219 or howard.shih@aafederation.org, or visit www.aafny.org/cic/.

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